Islam and the Inter-Community Relations

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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Preface

Islam remains constantly a live issue since its revival at the hands of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in early seventh century. However, it is perhaps for the first time that debate on the Faith has taken a global dimension. Some of the recent events have left almost none in the world to think either positively or negatively about it. The role of mass media, advanced means of communication and Internet, in favour or against Islam, takes perennial controversies to perhaps every home and there is hardly any other issue at present, which could match with this five-letter world. But, the question remains why it is so?

Those obsessed with Islam as a religion wonder why it is interfering in mundane things? Whereas, those who found Islam as a liberating ideology find fault with it's too much spirituality. The people who are spiritually oriented fail to appreciate the war teachings of Islam and the Muslim warriors find it hard to follow the moral and principled approach expected from them in Islamic perspective. The beauty and problem of Islam lies in its comprehensive nature. It regulates every sphere of life and prescribes injunctions on all human aspects. Naturally, is appreciated by as diverge a people as who are looking for salvation and those who are looking at it as a just and liberating force. Consequently, it prompts reactions alike from religious doyens and social reformers, capitalists and socialists, politicians and policymakers. In more recent time the Faith has been dubbed as the most intolerant, isolationist, oppressive and terrifying religion of the world. Islam is nowadays equalled with terrorism and its followers as actual or potential terrorists.

Without going into details regarding the genesis of this situation, it can be stated with certainty that both, those who consider Islam as a terrorist ideology and those who are fighting in reaction to certain persecutions in the name of Jihad,

are on the wrong. There can hardly be any denial that Islam cherishes for the establishment of a just and liberated society and permits to fight reactionary forces in a stringent way. However, its explicit priorities are always for the establishment of peace and harmony everywhere. The wrong approach of some Muslim youth and the ceaseless propaganda of the yellow media have created an unjustified image of Islam. Its true teachings are quoted out of context for and against to serve vested interests on both the sides.

It is, therefore, attempted in this small tract to place Islamic teachings in their actual colour and perspective. The subject matter of the present rendering revolves round relations of Muslims and non-Muslims. Is Islam intolerant to non-Muslims or it disregards building good relations with them? How Islam regulates relations of the Muslims and the non-Muslims in peace and war times? What sort of Islamic teachings are there for social life, business transactions, political organisation and strategic affairs in countries where the Muslims are in majority and where they are in minority? Does Islam permit a blatant war against all non-Muslims or it has some deterring power over its followers? This presentation briefly deals with such crucial questions of our time with a view to place Islam before non-Muslims with its natural shades and colours.

It is hoped that the book will generate further interest of its readers to make a deeper understanding on the issue dealt here in a synoptic way. The author will appreciate reactions and responses of one and all to further elaborate on the issue discussed herein.

Khalid Saifullah Rahmani

Socialising with Non-Muslims

Under the present global situation, the issue of mutual relations between the Muslims and the non-Muslims has acquired great significance, and it is a pity that this issue is today dealt with, just in a political and materialistic manner.

Since we have accepted Islam to be an all-embracing and a comprehensive way to life, it is our duty to analyse this issue in an Islamic perspective by looking into the teachings of Islam, rather than looking at it just politically and materialistically.

Humanity-A Single Family

The basic fact in this regard, which becomes obvious in light of the Qur'an, is that humanity at large was granted existence through a single being from whom Almighty Allah created its spouse before bringing the entire humanity into being.

"يا أيها الناس اتقوا ربكم الذي خلقكم من نفس واحدة وخلق منها زوجها وبث منهما رجالاً كثيراً ونساءً."

"O mankind! Hear your Guardian Lord Who created you from a single person, created out of it, his mate and from them twain scattered countless men and women." (4:1)

The Islamic viewpoint is that humanity is a single family; it is the branches of a single tree and the flowers of a single garden. This concept teaches us human brotherhood, that just how a Muslim is a brother to his fellow Muslim, in the same way every human being is a brother to his fellow man, and a part and parcel of this vast family.

This brotherhood and fraternity draws our attention to the fact that the hearts of people should be bound with love and affection.

The Concept of Human Nobility

The second basic fundamental fact for mutual affinity is human nobility and mutual respect. Almighty Allah has endowed man with nobility and dignity on the basis of his human characteristics:

"ولقد كرمنا بني آدم"

We have honoured the sons of Adam." (17:70)

"لقد خلقنا الإنسان في أحسن تقويم"

"We have indeed created man in the best of moulds." (95:4)

This honour and respect was granted to mankind as a whole without differentiating between a Muslim and the one other than him. And, this is a reality, which was given a practical shape by the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he stood up to a bier carried pass him. When his Companions inquired as to why he stood up to the bier when it contained the body of a Jew, he replied, "It too had a soul." (Bukhari, Hadeeth No. 1312)

Similarly, an infidel in the battle of Ahzaab was killed on the hands of the Muslims. The people of Makkah expressed their desire that his body be handed over to them in lieu of a ransom that they were prepared to pay. But, the Prophet (peace be upon him) then gave the dead body without taking ransom. (Al-Bidayah wan Nihayah, Vol. 4, Page 107) This was because pricing a corpse is against human respect and dignity.

Wars, before the advent of Islam, were unregulated. People would avenge by mutilating dead bodies and making garlands of parts thereof. Islam regulated war on some basic laws and principles which were made to abide by if a battle broke out despite attempts to avoid it. Amongst these laws were the ones prohibiting mutilation and torturing of captives, for both,

torturing and mutilation are against human respect and dignity. (Tirmizi, Vol. 2, Page 401)

The Words 'Kafir' and 'Thimmi'

Islam never appreciates insulting and ridiculing a non-Muslim. The impression some people take that the words Kafir "كافر" and Thimmi "ذمي" are used impertinently for non-Muslims is a total misconception.

Kufr (كفر) literally means rejection and denial. The Qur'an has used this word for the very same meaning. For example, referring to those who refused to believe in life after death, the Qur'an states:

"وهم بالآخرة هم كافرون".

And they (even) deny the Hereafter. (12:37)

Similarly, refusing to believe in the call of Islam delivered to them by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم the infidels of Makkah would say:

"إنما بما أرسلتم به كافرون".

We deny that which ye (Prophet) are sent with. (45:24)

This word was also used for rejecting sorcery as the Qur'an relates the statement of some of the previous nations who disbelieved in the Prophets sent to them:

"قالوا هذا سحر وإنا به كافرون".

They said, "This is sorcery, and we do reject it." (43:30)

As noticed in the above-mentioned verses, the word 'Kafir' "كافر" denotes the one who denies and rejects, meaning the one

who is unwilling to accept Unity of God and the teachings of Islam. Basically, the word 'Kafir' (كافر) is a synonym of 'non-Muslim' and calling a non-Muslim by this word would be unveiling the reality rather than intending any offence. If the word 'Kafir' were meant to offend the non-Muslims, then most certainly those non-Muslims whom the Qur'an, on countless occasions, addressed directly using this word would have taken it that way, whereas that was not the case.

Furthermore, the jurists have mentioned that it will be sinful calling a non-Muslim by the word 'Kafir' knowing that he would take it disparagingly. (Al-Ashbahh wan Nathaair, Vol. Page 287)

The word 'Thimmah' literally means trust of agreement, and a 'Thimmi' is he who has been granted protection and trust by the Muslims.

'Lisaanul Arab', a famous Arabic dictionary, states:

"رجل ذمي معناه له عهد".

"A Thimmi is a man who is under an agreement." (Lisaanul Arab, Vol. 5, Page 59)

Allama Ibn Atheer makes mention of the reason behind naming the non-Muslim minority 'Ahluth-Thimmah':

"سمى أهل الذمة لدخولهم في عهد المسلمين وأمانتهم".

"A non-Muslim is named Ahluth-Thimmah for being under the trust and protection of the Muslims." (An-Nihaayah, Vol. 2, Page 108)

These facts clarify that the words used for the non-Muslims are not derogatory in themselves and taking them to be so is an utter fallacy.

As far as socialising with non-Muslims is concerned, it is divided into four categories:

1- Social relations
2- Commercial relations
3- Political relations and
4- Religious relations.

The Qur'an as well as the Traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) profoundly enlightens us on each of these.

Social Relations

A verse of the Qur'an reads:

"لا ينهاكم الله عن الذين لم يقاتلوكم في الدين ولم يخرجوكم من دياركم أن تبروهم وتقسطوا إليهم، إن الله يحب المسمين".

"Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them. Indeed, Allah loveth those who are just." (60:8)

This verse of the Holy Qur'an carries great importance as it clarifies the fact that those non-Muslims who avoid physically challenging the Muslims should be shown good conduct and treated kindly. Accepting the true religion and guidance to the right path is restricted to the Will of Allah. Therefore, religious differences should not cause a Muslim to ill-treat others, as he will be rewarded for whatever kind treatment he offers:

"ليس عليك هداهم ولكن الله يهدي من يشاء وما تنفقوا من خير فلأنفسكم وما تنفقون إلا ابتغاء وجه الله وما تنفقوا من خير يوف إليكم وأنتم لا تظلمون".

"It is not for you to guide them to the right path. But Allah guides to the right path that He pleasant. Whatever good ye

give benefits your own souls, and ye shall only do so seeking the pleasure of Allah. Whatever good ye give, shall be rendered back to you, and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly." (2:272)

Reverend Abdullah Ibn Umar narrates that some of the Ansaar (The Medinite Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who were related to the Jews of Banu Quraidhah and Banu Nazeer, avoided assisting them through charity hoping that they would accept Islam under the circumstances (Al-Jaame li-Ahkaamil Qur'an, Vol. 3, Page 337). Allah said giving guidance to someone is restricted to the Will of Allah, therefore, its absence should not cause you to hesitate in assisting the needy and He disapproves this because you will be fully rewarded for whatever you spend.

A drought once befell Makkah, which restricted its people to line up carcasses. Despite the fact that it was a period in which differences between the Muslims and the infidels of Makkah were at its peak and the Muslims themselves were financially weak, the Prophet (peace be upon him) assisted them through 500 dirhams (silver coins), and above all, these 500 dirhams were sent to the leaders of Quraish – Abu Sufyaan and Sufyaan bin Umayyah, who were in the forefront of animosity against the Muslims. (Raaul Muhtaar, Vol. 3, Page 302)

Reverend Umar once came upon an elderly non-Muslim begging. On Umar asking him why he was begging, the beggar replied that the tax we are made to pay compels us to do so. On hearing this, reverend Umar fixed a wage for him from the state treasury saying:

ما أنصفنا أكلنا شيبتك ثم نأخذ منك الجذية.

"It would be unjust of us to collect tax from you (at this age) after devouring your youth". (Nasbur-Raayah, Vol. 3, Page 454)

Thus, most jurists are unanimous that it is permissible to discharge voluntary Sadaqaah (charity) to a non-Muslim; in

fact the Hanafi School is of the view that, except Zakaat, all other obligatory Sadaqaat can be given to non-Muslims. (Al-Durrul Mukhtaar, Vol. 3, Page 301)

Human life – Respect and Protection

The most important aspect of social life in Islam is peace and serenity, which is related to one's survival, wealth and dignity. The divine law of Islam has given the survival, wealth and dignity of a non-Muslim as much significance and importance as to that of a Muslim. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is reported to have said:

"دماءهم كدمائنا وأموالهم كأموالنا".

"Their blood (lives) is like that of ours and their wealth is also like that of ours." (Nasbur-Raayah, Vol. 4, Page 369)

Similarly, the Qur'an has prohibited slaying of a human being without any valid reason (be it of a Muslim or a non-Muslim):

"ولا تقتلوا النفس التي حرم الله إلا بالحق".

"Nor take life which Allah has made sacred except for just cause." (17:33)

Another verse reads:

"من قتل نفسا بغير نفس أو فساد في الأرض فكأنما قتل الناس جميعا".

"If anyone slew a person unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land, it would be as if he slew the whole mankind." (5:32)

This is because the one who slays an innocent soul can go further and target any other individual with destruction, thus he

would be declared as a killer of humanity at large. And, this applies to a Muslim as well as a non-Muslim.

Reverend Abdullah Ibn Umar relates that Prophet (peace be upon him) has said:

"من قتل معاهدا لم يرح رائحة الجنة وإن ريحها يوجد من مسيرة أربعين يوما".

"He who kills a Mu'aahid (non-Muslim under the trust and protection of the Muslims) will be deprived from the fragrance of Paradise which can be sensed from the distance of forty days." (Bukhari, Hadeeth No. 3166)

Just how a non-Muslim will be killed in retaliation for killing a Muslim, he will also be killed in retaliation for killing a non-Muslim, because the Qur'anic law pertaining to Qisaas (قصاص) (Retaliation) does not discriminate between one's persuasion:

"النفس بالنفس"

"Life for a life." (5:45)

The Islamic history has recorded a few incidents of this type wherein a Muslim was killed in retaliation for killing a non-Muslim, e.g. reverend Abdullah Ibn Umar relates an incident that took place during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is that a Muslim was killed for killing a non-Muslim (Thimmi). (Musannaf Abd al-Razzaq, Vol. 10, Page 101)

Reverend Umar is also reported to have ordered a Muslim to be slain for killing a Thimmi. (Musannaf Abd al-Razzaq, Vol. 10, Page 101)

Imam Shafi'ee has reported a similar incident with regard to reverend Ali that he also passed a judgment against a few Muslims and ordered them to be killed for killing a few non-

Muslims. (Musnad Imam Shafi'ee, Sunan Baihaqi, Vol. 12, Page 43)

However, there are some cases in which the guilty will not be murdered in retaliation for his act, e.g. if heirs of the killed person pardon him or if the act was proved inadvertent. In such a case, he will be liable to compensate the family of the victim by paying a certain amount of money. And, the blood money of both the Muslim and the non-Muslim is the same. Reverend Abdullah Ibn Umar has reported the Prophet (peace be upon him) to say that the blood money of a non-Muslim is the same to that of a Muslim. (Sunan Dar Qutni, Vol. 8, Page 178)

Allamah Zaila'ee has related the similar views of reverend Abdullah Ibn Abbas, Abu Hurairah, Usman bin Zaid and a few other Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) (Nasbur Raayah, Vol. 4, Page 368/9)

Guarding each other's Belongings

As mentioned above, the lives of both the Muslims and the non-Muslims are of equal importance, likewise their properties and belongings are also of equal importance, and hence they should not be handled without prior permission:

"إلا أن يكون تجارة عن تراض منكم".

"Unless there be amongst your traffic and trade by mutual good will." (4:29)

On conquering Khaibar, some Muslim soldiers handled the belongings of its non-Muslim inhabitants prior to their consent. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) learnt of this he addressed his Companions showing disapproval and declared whatever they took was unlawful for them. (Sunan Abi Dawood, Hadeeth No. 3050)

Many Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) are reported to have narrated his following words:

"ألا من ظلم معاهداً أو انتقصه أو كلفه فوق طاقته أو أخذ منه شيئاً بغير طيب نفس، فإنا حجته يوم القيامة".

"Beware! Who ever oppresses a Mu'aahid, withholds his dues, entrusts him with responsibilities beyond his capability or handles his belongings without prior consent, then I will be on his side on the Day of Resurrection." (Sunan Abi Dawood, Hadeeth No. 3053)

The punishment of amputation of a hand from one's body for theft will also be applicable on a Muslim who steals from a non-Muslim let alone a Muslim. Allamah Ibn Qudamah has mentioned this to be unanimously agreed upon by the jurists. (Al-Mughni li Ibn Qudamah, Vol. 12, Page 451)

This shows that the possessions and belongings of both, the Muslims and the non-Muslims, are of equal importance, hence guarded from theft by any one.

Guarding One's Modesty and Dignity

Without differentiating between a Muslim and a non-Muslim, the Prophet (peace be upon him) encouraged the juniors to respect the seniors and the seniors to be affectionate with the juniors.

The Qur'an addresses the believers:

"يا أيها الذين آمنوا اجتنبوا كثيرا من الظن إن بعض الظن إثم ولا تجسسوا ولا يغتب بعضكم بعضاً."

"O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible), for suspicion in some cases is a sin. And, spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs." (49:12)

In order to maintain chastity and dignity, men as well as women are instructed to lower their gazes and guard modesty:

"قل للمؤمنين يغضوا من أبصارهم ويحفظوا فروجهم".

“And say to the believing men that they should lower their gazes and guard their modesty.” (24:30)

"قل للمؤمنات يغضضن من أبصارهن ويحفظن فروجهن."

“And say to the believing women that they should lower their gazes and guard their modesty.” (24:31)

The commandment of lowering the gaze given to the believing men and women in this verse was kept general; meaning they should lower their gazes from a Muslim as well as the non-Muslim. Similar is the case of guarding one’s modesty.

Thus, the dignity of a non-Muslim is given the same value as to that of a Muslim, and the all which leads to calumny and discrimination was declared as unlawful, be it against a Muslim or a non-Muslim. The punishment on assaulting and blaming a Muslim female was also made applicable on reproaching a non-Muslim female. This shows that inhabitants of a Muslim state are conferred the right of guarding their chastity and modesty in which the Muslims and non-Muslims are considered alike.

Sharing Moments of Joy and Sorrow

Eating and feeding, learning and teaching, visiting and consoling each other during moments of joy and sorrow, all these aspects are part of social relations in which the Muslims are encouraged to show a kind and a bracing attitude towards non-Muslims.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted invitations of non-Muslims (Bukhari, Hadeeth No. 2017), invited them (Ad-Durrul Mansoor, Vol. 5, Page 181), showed hospitality and entertained them as guests (Al-Khasaaisul Kubraa, Vol. 1, Page 123), instructed his Companions to arrange their funeral rights (I’laaus Sunan, Vol. 8, Page 282) and visited their ailing (Bukhari, Hadeeth No. 5657).

In the wake of this noble character of the Prophet (peace be upon him) the jurists concluded many propositions pertaining to non-Muslims.

For example:

1. It is permissible to consume the food of a Majoosi (fire worshiper) except the animal that he slaughters.
2. A Muslim can join ties with his non-Muslim relative, be he a close relative or a far one, be he a "ذمي" Thimmi or a Harbi (non-Muslim living in a hostile state).
3. A Muslim is permitted to greet and shake hands with his non-Muslim neighbours.
4. A Muslim is also permitted to visit an ailing non-Muslim.
5. A Muslim is permitted to say the following words to the family of the deceased non-Muslim:

"أخلفك الله خيرا منه وأصلحه".

"May Allah replace you with the better and reform your condition." (Fatawaa Hindiyyah, Vol. 5, Page 384)

Educational Relations

The Muslims can build educational relations with non-Muslims by learning from and teaching each other. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said that knowledge and wisdom is a lost chattel of a believer, he should take it wherever he finds it. (Tirmizi, Hadeeth No. 2687)

The ransom on which the Prophet (peace be upon him) settled for the (educated) captives of Badr was that they would be freed on educating some Muslim children. (Al-Bidayah wan Nihayah, Vol. 3, Page 328)

This shows that no religious discrimination was upheld in matters of education too.

However, one thing that Islam has instructed the Muslims to do when it comes to social relations with non-Muslims is that they should preserve their identity through the physical appearance and customs as the Prophet (peace be upon him) once said:

"ليس منا من تشبه بغيرنا"

“He is not from amongst us who imitates others.” (Tirmizi, Hadeeth No. 2695)

It was for this reason that the Prophet (peace be upon him) disliked a Muslim to loose his distinctive appearance through his hair and beard.

Commercial Relations

As regards trade and commerce too, the Muslims and the non-Muslims are alike. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have traded with Abu Sufyan and Jaabir bin Mut’im through Mudhaarabah (Partnership in which one partner provides the capital while the other does the work).

Similarly, on conquering Khaibar, the Prophet (peace be upon him) left its Jewish inhabitants and landowners as they were and settled on apportioning the lands. (Bukhari, Hadeeth No. 4248)

Likewise, Muslims are permitted to work for non-Muslims, as reverend Ali reported to have worked for a Jew (Kanzul Ummaal, Vol. 2, Page 321) and reverend Khabbab who was familiar with ironwork, worked for Aas bin Waail:

خباب كان قينا فعل للعاص بن وائل".

(Bukhari, Hadeeth No. 2375, Muslim, Hadeeth No. 7062)

Muslims are also permitted to employ non-Muslims. The Arabian living was unimaginable in ancient times. The whole region was covered with sand, which made it extremely difficult to identify ways during a journey. In such conditions, people unaware of pathways would employ guides to accompany them on their journeys. These guides were called "دليل" (guided). The Prophet (peace be upon him) also employed a guide on the occasion of migrating from Makkah to Madinah and he was a non-Muslim. (Ahkaamu Ahlith-Thimmah li Ibn Qayyim, Page 207)

The jurists are also unanimous that a Muslim can employ a non-Muslim:

"يجوز أن يكون الأخير ذمياً والمستأجر مسلماً بلا خلاف".

(Al-Mawsooatul Fiqhiyyah, Page 105, under Ijaarah)

Many non-Muslims occupied high ranks and key posts during the Muslim rule. The financial minister and the governor of Hims during the time of Ameer Muawiyah was a Christian by the name Ibn Athaal. Ibn Sarjoon, the scribe of Abdul Malik bin Marwaan was also a Christian. Allamah Shibli mentions that the rank of a scribe in those days was after the prime minister if not equal to him, and he would be entrusted with the responsibility of the state memoranda. Abu Ishaaq Sabb occupied this post in the Abbasid era. Similarly, the minister of Adh'dud Dawlah (عضد الدولة), ruler of the Delum (ديلم) Empire was also a Christian by the name Nas bin Haaroon.

All these rulers, besides being distinct in their sovereignty, were also religiously inclined, but this did not prevent them from employing the non-Muslims on such significant and key posts. (Maqaalaat Shibli, Vol. 2, Page 217-219)

Political Relations

Politics is something inevitable regardless of which region one may be related to. This is because political ups and downs have an effect on every aspect of human life and largely on social peace and serenity. Consequently Islam, the religion that guides in every aspect of human life, has also permitted non-Muslims to protect their political rights in a Muslim state.

The prime objective behind politics is to maintain law and order in a country. By the advent of the Prophet (peace be upon him) most of the Arabian Peninsula was anarchic. The little security, which did exist, was through tribal customs and traditions, which maintained mutual relations between people.

Political Cooperation

During this period, an incident took place in Makkah wherein a Makkan withheld some rights of an outsider and refused to pay his dues. Being a complete stranger in Makkah, the alien was unable to exert pressure for getting payment of his dues from the Makkan. Constrained under the circumstances he related his adversity to the Makkan people and sought justice from them. On seeking this assistance, a man stood to his assistance and a meeting was held in the house of Abdullah bin Jad'aan. The Prophet (peace be upon him) while still in his teenage, most actively participated in this meeting and an organisation by the name of 'Halful Fudhool' (خلف الفضول) was established. The objective behind this organisation was to uphold justice and prevent oppression in Makkah by standing up against its perpetrators.

Although this incident took place before the conferring of Prophethood, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) was so much impressed by the event that once he said: If today (after my Prophethood) again I was to be called upon this, I will most fervently respond to it".

"لو ادعى به في الإسلام لأحبب".
(Al-Bidayah wan Nihaayah, Vol. 2, Page 291)

During the time of Banu Umayyah, a contention broke out between reverend Hussain and Waleed bin Utbah bin Abi Sufyaan in which the latter was at fault. Reverend Hussain sought help from the people in this regard and many of them stood to his assistance, which forced Waleed to step down. (Seerat Ibn Hishaam, Vol. Page 135)

These incidents justify the fact that Muslims and non-Muslims can cooperate and support each other in political issues and accommodate each other in their respective organisations.

Yusuf (May he be in peace) while realising ensuing harm to public interest and welfare, requested the king to entrust him with the state treasury when Egypt at the time was under the reign of non-Muslim people, as the Qur'an reads:

"قال اجعلن على خزائن الأرض".
Joseph said: "Set me over the store-houses of the land." (12:55)

Thus, he was entrusted with the responsibility, which was discharged by him most elegantly. This shows that a Muslim can become a member of an organisation, which is administered by a non-Muslim majority.

Abiding by Justice-based Laws

Adhering to laws based on justice is one of the significant aspects of political cooperation. This is because acquiring citizenship of a certain country is actually giving an assurance and agreeing to abide by and adhere to all its laws. And, an agreement is required to be complied with unless it goes against justice:

"أوفوا بالعقود" (Fulfill (all) obligations). (?: ?)

"أوفوا بالعهد" (Fulfill (all) contracts). (17:34)

Cooperation against Tyranny

Another important aspect of political cooperation is suppressing injustice and tyranny. This objective can be achieved if people stand beside each other and work together towards it, and numerous verses of the Holy Qur'an were revealed in this regard. The way to go about doing this can be concluded from a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which states:

"من رآى منكم منكرا فليغيره بيده، ومن لم يستطع فبلسانه ومن لم يستطع فبقلبه وذلك اضعف الإيمان".

"Whoever amongst you sees an evil or a wrongdoing, he should try to suppress it with his hands (physically), if this is not possible then he should raise a voice against it and if this too is not possible then he should (at least) abhor this by heart and this is the weakest form of Faith." (Muslim, Hadeeth No. 49)

The word hand "يد" in this tradition signifies force, which in this day and age can refer to voting and protesting against oppression and tyranny. Similarly, raising a voice against it can also include protesting against it. It was for this reason that the Qur'an prohibited misusing the tongue except in cases of protesting against injustice:

"لا يحب الله الجهر بالسوء من القول إلا من ظلم".

"Allah loveth not the shouting of evil words in public, except by the one who has been wronged." (4:148)

And some methods of protesting are also related from the Prophet (peace be upon him) through his traditions. (Majmauz Zawaaid, Vol. 8, Page 120)

One can conclude from the above mentioned that there is nothing wrong with the Muslims in politically cooperating with non-Muslims and vice versa. However, this cooperation should be in upholding justice against the perpetrators of oppression rather than merely in materialistic matters.

Religious Relations

Socialising in matters of religion is the most important aspect of relations between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. Steadfastness on one's own religion together with respecting religious sentiments of others is a basic teaching of Islam and there are two basic points around which it revolves in this regard. Each of these two points is further elaborated here.

Practicing Islam

Muslims, wherever they may be, in an Islamic state or else where, they are legally obliged to uphold the Islamic law in four departments: اعتقادات (beliefs), عبادات (prayers, etc.), أحوال شخصية (personal law) and معاملات (dealings).
Aitqadaat اعتقادات are laws pertaining to one's inner self, e.g. believing in Tawheed (Unity of God), Risaalat (Prophethood), Aakhirat (Hereafter), etc.
Ibadaat عبادات are laws pertaining to ones spiritual relations with the Almighty, e.g. Salaah (prayers), Fasting, etc.
Ahwal Shaksia أحوال شخصية (Personal law) other than the matters of marriage and divorce, this also includes laws pertaining to inheritance, will and rights of relatives, etc.
Mu'amlaat معاملات (commercial dealings) this includes trade, lending and leasing, gifting, etc. It also includes forbidden dealings such as interest-based transactions, gambling, etc.

These four departments are such in which Muslims are liable to uphold the Islamic law though they may be living as a minority and not possessing any political authority as such.

However, there is a set of laws that is more of a social type and meant to be applied on a collective basis such as the criminal laws, قصــاص (Retaliation) and other punishments, constitutional set up, etc. These laws will become applicable only where Muslims are living in a majority and also have authority to a certain extent.

Thus, the Islamic laws will most certainly not be abandoned at the cost of maintaining relations with the non-Muslims, because practicing and applying these laws will neither harm nor benefit the non-Muslims.

Preserving One's Identity

Islam also instructs its followers that they should preserve their cultural and civil identity. And, this was the reason behind prohibiting Muslims from adopting resemblance and imitating other nations. A tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) narrated by Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Aas states:

"ليس منا من شبه بغيرنا، لا تشبهوا باليهود والنصارى".

"He is not from amongst us who imitates others. Avoid imitating the Jews and the Christians." (Tirmizi, Hadeeth No. 2695)

This imitation can be in four different ways:

1. Imitating others in their religious customs and rituals, e.g. a Muslim wearing a cross or a cross thread (sacred thread worn by the Hindus) is an imitation of the respective religion in its religious customs. The jurists have regarded such an imitation to be a cause of 'Kufr' (disbelief). The fire worshippers would wear a certain type of a hat regarding which the jurists have stated.

   "ولو وضع على رأسه قلنسوة المجوس كفر".

"If one wears a hat of the fire worshippers, he has disbelieved." (Al-Multaqat fil Fataawaa Al-Hanaffiyyah, Page 245)

The ruling will be similar in the case of applying 'Kashqah' قشقة (a form of colour applied by the Hindus on the forehead) as it is a Hindu religious custom.

2. Partaking in the religious festivals and ceremonies of the non-Muslims: If attending such ceremonies is in order to approve of, applaud and corroborate their religious acts and beliefs, then this will also be Kufr (disbelieve), otherwise it will be Haraam (totally prohibited). (Al-Multaqat, Page 245)

This is because corroborating a religion despite believing it to be improper is a blatant act of hypocrisy nor does it expect any non-Muslim to imitate the Muslims in their customs and rituals and attend their religious festivals.

3. Cultural imitation – Adopting such patterns of dressing and facial appearance, etc. which, despite having nothing to do with religion, has become an identity of another nation. For example, wearing a Dhoti دهوتي (a waist piece passing between the legs and fastened behind). Although, wearing a Dhoti has apparently nothing to do with religion, but this has become a particularity of Hindus. Taking up such cultural appearance of others would be Makrooh Tahrimi (disapproved to the point of being forbidden).

Allamah Ibn Taymiyyah has further elaborated this issue in his book 'Iqtidhaa al-Sirrat il Mustaqeem, Vol.1 Page 94).

However, this ruling can be subject to changes as modes of dressing and fashions change from time to time. If today a certain way of dressing is a particularity of a certain nation, then tomorrow it is likely to change and become general. Hence, adopting that mode will no more fall under imitating a

particular nation. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi in Imdadul Fatawaa, (Vol. 4, Page 268, 9.30345), and Mufti Kifaayatullah in Kifaayatul Mufti (Vol. 9, Page 161) have expressed similar views regarding shirts and pants.

4. There is no problem in Muslims taking assistance from the non-Muslims and adopting their methods in matters of management and administration. Reverend Umar is reported to have adopted the Roman and Iranian method of accounting. (Al-Farooq, Vol. 2, Page 103)

Similarly, the trench in the battle of Ahzaab was dug on the method of the Persians after consulting reverend Salmaan Faarsi (Al-Bidayah wan Nihayah, Vol. 4, Page 95).

Likewise, it will be permissible to attend functions and adopt a fashion, which is not a particularity of any nation.

This concept of Islam (restricting the Muslims from imitating others) is certainly not parochial or dogmatic in nature; rather it maintains a cultural distinction. It is for this reason that Islam does not expect others also to adopt its customs and rituals.

Trying to maintain an identity is nothing peculiar. It is worth considering that Almighty Allah has created every individual with distinctive appearance and voice. Every nation prefers keeping an identity different to others. Similarly, every nation has its own flag, every school its own uniform and every governmental department also has its own distinct uniform.

This is clear enough to prove that keeping a distinctive identity is neither contemptible nor it is any kind of discord or prejudice against others. As much as Islam expects its people to preserve and maintain their identity, it has also granted the non-Muslim inhabitants of a Muslim state all the freedom to live while preserving their religious and cultural identities.

Respect for other Religions

As mentioned previously that respecting other religions and further avoiding interference in their religious affairs holds a great significance. The crux of the Qur'anic teachings is inviting people towards 'Tawheed' (Unity of God). Nothing in Islam is more laudable than Tawheed while nothing other than 'Shirk' (ascribing partners to Allah) is more reprehensible in Islam. But despite this, Islam has, to a great extent, provided freedom of belief without compelling anybody to accept a certain religion:

"لا إكراه في الدين".

"Let there not be compulsion in religion." (2:256)

Almighty Allah once addressed the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم by saying:

"أ فأنت تكره الناس حتى يكونوا مؤمنين".

"Will thou then compel mankind against their will to believe?" (10:99)

A famous incident of reverend Umar is related in this regard wherein he confronted his slave with the call of Islam. But, despite constantly being encouraged to accept Islam, his slave refused to do so each time he was confronted and the reply which he would receive from reverend Umar was: "لا إكراه في الدين". Reverend Umar then freed the slave before parting from the world (Kitaabul Amwaal, Vol. 1, Page 154).

Freedom of Religion

Together with the freedom of faith, the non-Muslims are also given complete freedom to practice on their respective religions. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was made to say to the infidels of Makkah:

لكم دينكم ولي دين".

“To you be your way and to me mine.” (109:6)

Another verse reads:

"لنا أعمالنا ولكم أعمالكم".

“For us (is the responsibility of) our deeds, and for you of your deeds.” (42:15)

The religious liberality of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was such that when a delegation of Christians from Najraan came before him, he permitted them to offer their prayers in Masjid al-Nabi facing the direction, which they believed to be their Qiblah (direction faced in prayers). (Ahkaamu Ahlith-Thimmah, Vol. 1, Page 316)

The jurists have mentioned that a Muslim husband cannot prevent his non-Muslim (Christian or Jew) wife from fasting on a particular day if that is her religious requirement, though it may be withholding him from his legal right to intimacy.

Similarly, he may not prevent her from wearing or keeping a cross in his house. (Ahkaamu Ahlith-Thimmah, Vol. 1, P- 316)

‘No’ to Abusing Religious Personalities

It is also of utmost importance that the religious personalities and deities (regardless of which religion they may be related to) should not be targeted with verbal abuse. Undoubtedly, Islam denounces ascribing partners to Allah Himself as well as in His attributes, but then too, under religious liberty, it disallows such discourtesy against their deities: A verse of the Holy Qur’an in this regard reads as follows:

"لا تسبوا الذين يدعون من دون الله".

“Revile not ye those when they call upon besides Allah.” (6:108)

Respecting Places of Worship

The Qur’an while condemning the act of demolishing places of worship has begun with making mention of the churches and synagogues before mentioning the Muslim places of worship (22:40), which signifies the fact, that showing respect to places of worship, regardless of which religion it may be related to must always be kept in consideration.

The agreement, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) made with the people of Najraan, included the fact that their places of worship will be kept intact and their religious affairs will remain free from any sort of interference. (Sunan Abi Dawood, Hadeeth, No. 3041)

Similarly, Imam Abu Yusuf relates that the documents prepared for the people of Hira حيرة which was conquered on the hands of reverend Khalid bin Waleed during the caliphate of reverend Abu Bakr was also inclusive of the fact that their places of worship will not be demolished (Mawsooat al-Kharaaj, Page 143).

Many similar incidents are recorded throughout the caliphate of the four caliphs and thereafter, which illustrate that together with being sensitive in matters of belief (Tawheed) and preserving one’s identity, etc, Islam is also magnanimous and liberal towards social issues of the non-Muslims. But, it is a great cause of regret and disappointment that this reality is today concealed with veils upon veils of misunderstandings and misconceptions.

Jihaad-Reality and Misconception

The topic, which is presently used to sow the seeds of doubt and uncertainty in relations between the Muslims and the non-Muslims, is that of ‘Jihaad’.

‘Jihaad’ is today portrayed as if every Muslim has clung onto a sword waiting to put to it every non-Muslim who comes his way. As a result ‘Jihaad’ is now levelled with ‘terrorism’ whereas Jihaad is of legal status while terrorism is otherwise.

Not every non-Muslim will be targeted with Jihaad, rather it will be those who constantly come up against the Muslims and fight against them:

"قـاتلوا فـي سـبيل الله الـذين يقـاتلونكم ولا تعتـدوا، إن الله لا يحـب المعتدين".

“Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors.” (2:190)

This verse restricts one from transgressing limits. What is it that is meant by “Do not transgress limits”?

Firstly, withhold your might from those who avoid fighting against you. Secondly, if matters do come down to Jihaad then adhere to the basic rules of war by sparring women, children, elderly, religious leaders, the excused and those who have sat back from partaking in the campaign. (Sunan Abi Dawood, Hadeeth No. 2614)

Making mention of those with whom Jihaad is permitted, a verse of the Qur’an reads:

"الذين كفروا وصدوا عن سبيل الله".

“Those reject Allah and hinder (men) from the path of Allah.” (47:1)

Another verse reads:

أذن للـذين يقـاتلونكم بـأنهم ظلمـوا وإن الله علـى نصـرهم لقـدير، الـذين اخرجوا من ديارهم بغير حق إلا أن يقولوا ربنا الله".

"To those against whom war is made, permission is granted (to fight), because they are wronged; and verily, Allah is most powerful for their aid. (They are) those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right, (for no reason) except that they say, "Our Lord is Allah." (22:39-40)

These verses distinctly reveal that the commandment of Jihaad is not against those who have just disbelieved, rather it is against those who together with disbelieving, took to oppression and tyranny.

Other numerous verses of the Qur'an reveal that the Muslims should answer to the call of treaty made by their opposition who are willing to withdraw and resort to an agreement:

"فإن اعتذروكم فلم يقاتلونكم وألقوا إليكم السلم فما جعل الله لكم عليهم سبيلا".

"If they withdraw from you and fight you not, and (instead) send you (guarantees of) peace, then Allah hath opened no way for you (to fight against them)." (4:90)

"وإن جنحوا للسلم فاجنح لها".

"If the enemy inclines towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace." (8:61)

Thus, Jihaad is made against the contentious and the mischievous ones and not against the peace lovers. In fact if the non-Muslims harass a certain group of Muslims other than the ones they have conciliated with, then too the Muslims will not be permitted to break the agreement by attacking them. Rather, they should assist their Muslim brothers by applying political pressure on the perpetrators of injustice and violence:

"وإن استنصروكم في الدين فعليكم النصر إلا على قوم بينكم وبينهم ميثاق، والله بما تعملون بصير".

“If they seek your aid in religion, it is your duty to help them, except against a people with whom ye have a treaty of mutual alliance. And, remember Allah seeth all that ye do.” (8:72)

The above-mentioned verses of the Holy Qur’an clarify that only those who declare war against Islam will be retaliated with Jihaad. And, withholding the perpetrators of oppression would not termed as injustice; rather, it is the prime element in upholding peace and justice.

On the contrary, those who avoid pitting against the Muslims and expelling them from their homes, they should in turn be shown good conduct and given a right to live a life of peace and harmony.

"لا ينهاكم الله عن الذين لم يقاتلوكم في الدين ولم يخرجوكم من دياركم، أن تبروهم وتقسطوا إليهم، إن الله يحب المقسطين".

“Allah forbids you not with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loved those who are just.” (60:8)

The Life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Jihaad

It was at the total of 82 occasions that the Muslims and the non-Muslims clashed with each other during the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) stay in Madinah. Majority of these clashes took place not far from Madinah, which is a dear indication to the fact that the Muslims were not the ones who made the initiative. A total of 1018 individuals were killed during these 82 clashes with the average of 11 to 12 casualties per campaign.

This is the very same number through which it is today portrayed that Islam was propagated by sword, whereas thousands of people (according to the Hindu sources) were killed during the great war of Mahabharat in addition to the 12 million given death sentences by the Christian religious courts. Many of the dead were burnt alive. It is a pity that the Western world, despite being destructive, ferocious and colonialist throughout history, labeled the Islamic history as blood stained.

Jizyah (Protection Tax)

One of the issues raised today by chauvinist organisations against Islam is that of 'Jizyah' (Protection Tax). This issue is not an unfamiliar one for the Muslims as it was frequently raised by the orientalists in the past and countered by the learned scholars of Islam accordingly.

'Jizyah' is a tax levied on the non-Muslims living in an Islamic state in lieu of protection to them. The Muslims are liable to pay Zakaat annually and it would have gone against freedom of religion if the non-Muslims were also made liable to discharge Zakaat. Thus, they were imposed with an individual tax named 'Jizyah' in exchange for the security of their lives and properties.

The children as well as the elderly, ailing, the excused, unemployed and the religious sect, e.g. Pope, etc. were exempted from this tax which shows that it was merely a tax and not any kind of a fine or penalty for their disbelief. (Ahkaamu Ahlith-Thimmah, Vol. 1, Page 148, Hidayaah, Vol. 4, Page 318)

What was the Amount levied?

Individuals with a low income were liable to pay 12 dirhams (silver coins) per annum while those with a moderate and a high income were prescribed 24 and 48 dirhams respectively. (Bayhaqi, Vol. 9, Page 329, Hadeeth No. 18685) 12 dirhams

are approximately 3 tolas (36 grams) of silver, which in this day and age cost approximately 275 rupees.

Any sound-minded person would not take such a meager amount of tax to be a burden, rather we will be most willing to pay such a scanty amount (per annum) as tax and be thankful if the government in return takes their responsibility and makes necessary arrangements for public security.

This was the reality behind 'Jizyah' for which accusations of oppression, extremism and intolerance are today leveled with Islam.

Solution

Under the present circumstances, it is the responsibility of Muslims to familiarise non-Muslim brothers with the genuine teachings of Islam. The Muslims should further reform their actions and conduct in order to prove that Islam is not based on extremism or intolerance, rather it is a liberal, all-embracing and a well moderated religion which is a peaceful shelter not just for the Muslims but for humanity at large.

"إن الدين عند الله الإسلام".

"The religion in the sight of Allah is the Peace." (5 :?)

الله ارنا الحق حقا وارزقنا اتباعه وأرنا الباطل باطلا وارزقنا اجتنابه.